

Docket No. 10001.000600 (NVLS 379)
Response To Final Rejection
July 1, 2003

REMARKS

Summary of Amendments

With the above amendments, claims 1-7, 9-13, 17, and 19-21 remain in the application. Claim 8 has been cancelled. Claims 1, 17, and 19 have been amended to more distinctly claim embodiments of the invention. No new matter has been added.

Applicants respectfully request entry of the aforementioned amendments as they place the claims in condition for allowance and do not raise new issues. Note that claims 1 and 17 have been amended to include the pedestal limitation of claim 8, which has been with the application as originally filed.

Substance of Examiner Interview

On July 1, 2003, the Examiner and the undersigned had a telephonic conference to discuss claims 1 and 8 in view of US 6,270,582 (Rivkin). The purpose of the interview is to identify the pedestal of Rivkin as it appears to the undersigned that Rivkin's pedestal is actually a back plate and not being used to support a wafer. The Examiner explained that the pedestal of Rivkin is being read as indirectly supporting the seats that support the wafer via the side and top plates. No agreement regarding any of the pending claims has been reached except that the Examiner noted that claim 1 would overcome Rivkin if amended to specifically recite a pedestal supporting a wafer thereon.

Claim Rejections -- 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 1 and 17 have been amended to recite that the load lock has only one pedestal. It is respectfully submitted that claims 1 and 17 now meet the mandate of 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

Claim Rejections -- 35 U.S.C. § 103

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Claims 1-7, 9-13, 17, and 19-21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over US 6,251,759 to Guo et al. ("Guo") in view of US 6,270,582 to Rivkin et al. ("Rivkin").

Claim 1 is patentable over the combination of Guo and Rivkin for at least reciting: "a load-lock having only one pedestal configured to support a single wafer thereon." Guo does not disclose or suggest the use of a load lock with only one pedestal. Neither does Rivkin. In Rivkin, what is referred to as a "pedestal" is actually a bottom plate in that it does not support a wafer (see Rivkin, column 6, lines 1-14). In Rivkin, the wafers are supported on wafer seats 140 and 142 (Rivkin, FIG. 3) or 182 and 184 (Rivkin, FIG. 4), not on the "pedestal." In the present application, the pedestal serves as a wafer support in that the wafer is supported by the pedestal itself (see Specification, page 7, lines 5 to 12). Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that claim 1 is patentable over the combination of Guo and Rivkin.

Claims 2-7 and 9-13 depend on claim 1. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that claims 2-7 and 9-13 are patentable over the combination of Guo and Rivkin for the same reasons, as well as because of the combination of features set forth in these claims and in claim 1.

Similar to claim 1, claim 17 is patentable over the combination of Guo and Rivkin for at least reciting: "a load lock having only one pedestal for supporting a wafer thereon." Claims 19-21 depend on claim 17. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that claims 19-21 are patentable over the combination of Guo and Rivkin for the same reasons, as well as because of the combination of features set forth in these claims and in claim 17.

Conclusion

For at least the above reasons, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1-7, 9-13, 17, and 19-21 are in condition for allowance. If the next communication is other than a Notice Of Allowance, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (408)436-2112.

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If for any reason an insufficient fee has been paid, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge the insufficiency to Deposit Account No. 50-2427.

Respectfully submitted,
Craig L. Stevens et al.

Dated: July 1, 2003

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